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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Bulgaria

SUBJECT Coal Mines

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SOURCE

Anthracite

1. Svogenski Voglishten Basin (A1)

   (a) This anthracite region is in the western part of the Svoge mountain range which stretches from Yugoslavia to the Black Sea. This basin is located astride the Sofia-Pleven-Varna railroad at a distance ranging from 18 to 40 miles from Sofia.

   (b) The mines are all underground and mined by very primitive methods with a minimum of pillars.

   (c) Production is from 10 to 30,000 metric tons per year.

   (d) There are twenty to thirty small mines employing from five to twenty men each.

2. Vrushka Chuka (A2)

   (a) This is a tiny basin at the Yugoslav border. It has been worked from both the Yugoslav and Bulgarian sides.

   (b) Production is small and irregular.

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(c) The seams are irregular, discontinuous and only from one to three meters thick. The coal is badly folded and faulted. 25X1A

3. Varshets (not Orashets) Basin (A3)

There are about 10 distinct mining areas in this field which is on the Yugoslav-Bulgarian border. The area produces mainly gas coal (see B2) but there is a little anthracite.

Bituminous Coal

4. Balkan Basin (Trevnenski Balkan) (B1)

(a) This bituminous field is located in the central part of the country. The eastern end is near Sliven, and the western end near Varshets (or Vurshets).

(b) There are three major producing mines: The Prince Boris and Lav mines in the west and the Chumerna mine in the eastern part. A number of small mines produce intermittently.

(c) Production does not exceed 20 to 30,000 tons per year, at the most.

(d) Reserves are uncertain but are probably about 15 to 20 million metric tons.

(e) Mining methods are still primitive. In normal times it is difficult to sell this coal. During World War II the production was materially increased by adding additional laborers, but no modernization of methods or equipment was attempted.

5. Vrushka Chuka Field (B2)

(a) This is an area of gas and anthracite coal of little importance.

(b) The production is only a few thousand tons per year by primitive methods.

6. Souchostrel Basin

(a) This basin, near the southwest corner of Bulgaria, contains no coal mines.

(b) The coal is of good grade but occurs in thin seams.

Lignite Coal

7. The Georgi Dimitrov Basin (Formerly named the Pernik Basin) (L1)

(a) The mines now operating are:

Underground:

Stari Brudnitsi
Bali Breg
Zarava Krusha
Svetia Anna
Bobov Dol (now called Brigadir)
Teva (new)
Tolbukhin (new)
Name unknown (new)
The Christov Botov mine is mined out.

Open Pit:

Kutsian
Republika (new)
The Gladno Pol mine is mined out.

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(b) This is the major producing area in Bulgaria. It is located north of the town of Pernik.

(c) The production in metric tons since 1943 is given in the following table:

1943	3,080,000 tons
1944	2,600,000 tons
1945	2,800,000 tons
1946	below 3,000,000 tons
1947	3,200,000 to 3,300,000 tons
1953	probably about 4,000,000 tons.

(d) The reserves are still large.

(e) In the late thirties mechanical mining machines were introduced in this area. Since World War II, mechanization has been increasing with the introduction of USSR machinery. In 1938 it was planned to buy Sullivan cutting machines, but on account of exchange shortage, Eickhoff machines manufactured in Bochum, West Germany, were purchased. After 1942 the same machines were adopted in all the underground mines of the Pernik Basin. Judging from reports I have received, the Soviet "combine" similar to the German cutting and loading machines has been adopted in recent years. In 1950, (fnu) Franghia, a Bulgarian mining engineer who had formerly represented Eickhoff in Bulgaria spent some time in Brussels and Vienna and returned to Bulgaria.

(f) A central power plant of 15,000 kw capacity formerly supplied the district. In 1953 a new 50,000 kw plant was completed. However, at the beginning of 1954, a government minister admitted that it was so poorly constructed that it could not function.

(g) In 1944-45 there were 14,000 employees, including electric power employees. I estimate that in March 1954, there are probably about 20,000.

8. Bobov-Dol Field (L2)

There has been little change in this field since World War II. New housing has been constructed for the workers, but mining is for the most part still carried on by primitive unmechanized methods.

9. Pirin (Gorna - Dzhumaya) Field (L3)

This field, in the southwest part of Bulgaria, was quite active during World War II. About 600 to 1000 men were employed, with a production of 100,000 to 150,000 tons per year. Since the Communists took over, it has become a work camp for prisoners.

10. The Dospey Field (L4) near Samokov is a small field producing not over 1,000 tons per year. 25X1A

11. Cham Korio Field (L5)

No production. No mines.

12. Burgas Basin (L6)

(a) This field, close to the shore of the Black Sea, was formerly a private concession operated by two engineers, (fnu) Burov and (fnu) Gubidelnikoff. The only mine was the Cherno More mine.

(b) The mining is difficult. The seams are thin and faulted, and there is an excessive amount of water. In 1953 there was a complaint in the papers of the poor performance of the mine and the 5,000 kw power plant. Burov and Gubidelnikoff, who had been retained in a subordinate position, were removed, and a "show" trial was expected. There was no news of a trial. Through contact with Bulgarian sources, I learned that Burov had been sentenced to death and Gubidelnikoff to 20 years of imprisonment, in a secret trial in August 1953. This information, 25X1 [redacted] was confirmed in December 1953 by a newly arrived escapee from Bulgaria.

13. "Marbas" (L7) formerly called the Maritza(Maritsa) Area.

(a) The Marbas area in Central Bulgaria has been undergoing a large industrial expansion since World War II based on the false assumption that there was a large, easily mined quantity of lignite coal. [redacted] 25X1X A 25,000 kw electric power plant has been constructed to add to the 12-15,000 kw of power formerly available. A sulphuric acid plant was built to utilize pyrite. A plant to manufacture artificial nitrate fertilizers, as well as explosives, was completed.

(b) The coal mines now producing are:

Dimitrovgrad (formerly Maritza)
Vulcan
Nadezhda
Marichleri
The Istatsanik and Vera mines have been exhausted.

(c) The production is now probably between 800,000 and 1,000,000 tons per year in contrast to the 100,000 tons before World War II.

(d) I believe there are not over 15 million tons within a radius of 30 miles from Khaskovo. The authorities formerly spoke of billions of tons. Both the Bulgarian premier and the Minister of Mines have

admitted the error. They are now (1954) bringing in coal from as far as 100 miles away. Even in those mines where a reserve is available, development has not been sufficient to get out the required tonnage. 25X1A

(e) A new development at the eastern end of the field 40-50 miles east of Khaskovo has been shrouded in secrecy. The area has not been given a name, but an inadvertant mention in the Bulgarian parliament by a deputy representing that area indicated that the field had promise.

(f) The mines have been mechanized. There are two seams, two meters and two and one-half meters thick.

14. Chamdere (L8), Gobrovitza (L9), Smolion (L10), Kurdzhali (L11), and Borov-Dol (L12) are of no importance.

15. Lam Basin (L13) has no mine. There is much water.

16. Sofiya (Sofia) Basin (L14)

(a) The area lies close to Sofia.

(b) The four small open pit mines in the Sofiya Basin are:

Kurilo
Bel Brtsk
Chukurove
Unknown name.

These mines have been intensively developed under the Communists, and the people are compelled to buy this coal for domestic uses because of its poor quality.

(c) Production is about 100,000 metric tons per year from all mines.

(d) There are chances of developing several large tonnage producers in this field. There are seams 10, 20 and even 30 meters thick, and they can be mined by open pit methods.

17. L15 and L20 are of no importance.

Coke Plants

18. There is very little coking coal in Bulgaria. A small old coke plant, at Prince Boris mine, produces not over 1,500 tons of coke per year.

Briquette Plants

19. There was one coal briquetting plant at Pernik built in 1931. A new briquetting plant was planned for the Maritza (now Dimitrovgrad) mine, but it was never built.

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